

## 4 Australian Governing Party Lawmakers Doubt Human Contribution to Global Warming

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CANBERRA, Australia (AP) -- Four Australian governing party lawmakers on Monday rejected the idea that humans are causing global warming, the conclusion reached by their colleagues on a parliamentary committee.

The 11-member multiparty committee had examined the potential of geosequestration - the experimental process of burying carbon, emitted by burning coal, to keep it out of the atmosphere.

The majority report found that cost was the greatest obstacle to the commercial application of carbon capture and storage in Australia, the world's largest exporter of coal. The report recommended that the government fund at least one such geosequestration system at a coal-fired power station.

It also said that "there is now compelling evidence that human activity is changing the global climate."

However, four lawmakers wrote a second report rejecting that conclusion.

"We disagree with the report's unequivocal support for the hypothesis that global warming is caused by man - so-called anthropogenic global warming," the dissenting report said.

"Whether human activities are disturbing the climate in dangerous ways has yet to be proven," it added.

The dissenting report could embarrass Prime Minister John Howard's government, which accepts that human activity is accelerating global warming. The government is fending off criticisms that it has not done enough during 11 years in office to reduce Australia's emissions.

Questioned in Parliament, Howard distanced himself from the dissenting report.

"No, I don't agree with their views," Howard told Parliament.

Climate change and Howard's refusal to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on reducing global greenhouse gas emissions are looming as major issues in elections due around October.

The opposition Labor Party, which has led the government in opinion polls throughout the year, is perceived as more responsive to a need to reduce Australia's reliance on cheap coal for energy.

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